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By the Grace of G-d
Rosh Chodesh Sivan, 5727
Brooklyn, N.Y.

To All Participants in the Fifth Annual Banquet
of the Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch in the Upper Mid-West
Minneapolis, Minn.

Greeting and Blessing:

I trust that this year's Annual Banquet will be imbued with the additional inspiration of Hakhel ("Gather Together") - the special Mitzvah of this post-Shemittah year, which occurs once in seven years.

It has been pointed out on previous occasions that every Mitzvah consists of a "body" and a "soul." The "body" represents the actual Mitzvah itself, as defined by the laws and practices which govern its performance. In this respect a Mitzvah is limited in place, time, and person. On the other hand, the "soul" of a Mitzvah is its hidden and inner aspects, which are without limitations.

The same, of course, is true of the Mitzvah of Hakhel. Its actual performance was limited to the place and time of the Beth Hamikdosh, but its significance and inner content are valid also today and here.

In an inner sense, Hakhel, among other things, calls upon every Jew - man, woman, and child - to summon and mobilize the internal and eternal forces with which every Jew is endowed by virtue of his and her Divine soul - a "part of G-dliness Above." This "Hakhel" of the many and varied capacities of the individual must be directed toward the realization of the fundamental purpose of the Mitzvah of Hakhel - the strengthening of Torah-life in the every-day life: of the self, one's family, and the environment at large.

In these crucial days for our people, we must remember that the Torah and Mitzvot constitute the unifying forces that unites all Jews in all parts of the world and is the source of our supernatural strength and very life. Above all, we must never lose sight of the fact that only an adequate Torah-true education of our children can provide a firm basis for the cultivation and preservation of this unity. Of this we are particularly reminded by the Mitzvah of Hakhel this year, as well as by the Festival of Mattan-Torah which we are soon to celebrate.

The Merkos L'Inyonei Chinuch is dedicated to the realization of this purpose through its ramified activities and programs which are well known. This work deserves the utmost support. It is to be hoped that the Annual Banquet will provide the occasion to demonstrate such support for the Upper Mid-Western region of Merkos activity.

May the Almighty bless each and every one of you, and yours, in the midst of all our people Israel, with the utmost Hatzlocho.

With blessing, *M. Schneerson*